

# Resolution supporting CEDAW

**Item: 10-08: A Resolution Supporting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).**

**GA Committee Assignment:** 10- Social Justice Issues A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness

## **Summary of the business and what it wants the Assembly to do:**

This resolution comes from the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and asks the General Assembly to direct the Stated Clerk to write a letter to the President of the United States and to Congress and calls for the United States to ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

## **Background:**

In the rationale, ACWC argues that CEDAW has been ratified by 186 countries. The U.S. is one of eight countries that have not ratified the document since it was first adopted by the United Nations in 1979. The document contains 30 Articles addressing the rights of women in issues of equality, property ownership, education, and health. The General Assembly of the PC (USA) has already asked the U.S. to ratify this document (1987). ACWC is asking commissioners to affirm it again in light of the 30 year anniversary of CEDAW (Dec. 2009). The text of the CEDAW document has not been provided to commissioners and no link to the [text](#) (readily available on the internet) is posted on pc-biz.

## **Analysis of the business and how it would affect the Church:**

Article 12 dealing with Health includes the right to "family planning. It says in the first point:

1. *States Parties shall ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.* (underline added)

The language in the actual article is vague and does not overtly address abortion, however, accompanying guidelines for implementation called General Recommendations make very clear that signing countries are expected to provide women with access to abortion. If the United States ratifies this document, all legislation restricting abortion—whether State or Federal—would be out of compliance. In other words, laws requiring parental notification for minors, waiting periods, information requirements, or spousal notification would be out of compliance with CEDAW. All medical providers would be required to provide abortion services or refer for abortion—conscience protections would be removed. Abortion would essentially be codified as a 'human right.'

It is not helpful to the unity of the church for the General Assembly to endorse advocacy for documents that commissioners have not read and which have potential to divide the membership.

## **Pertinent Resources:**

Text of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cedaw.htm>

General Recommendation No. 24 (20th session, 1999)

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom24>

Cedaw Fact Sheet from PPL: [http://www.ppl.org/GA\\_2010/CEDAW\\_FACT\\_SHEET.pdf](http://www.ppl.org/GA_2010/CEDAW_FACT_SHEET.pdf)

## **Action by GA that will help the Church:**

*Disapprove*

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**An Advisory on Business to the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2010)**

*From Presbyterians Pro-Life*